



ECDE TEACHERS TRAINING AND ITS EFFECT ON LEARNING IN SELECTED PRE-SCHOOLS CENTRES IN WEST POKOT COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of Early Childhood Development (ECD) teacher training on learning process in classrooms in Kanyarkwat Zone, West Pokot County, Kenya. A descriptive survey research paradigm was used. The study was conducted in 14 ECD centres within the division. A sample size of 42 ECDE teachers was selected. All the head teachers of the selected ECDCs participated. The teachers were selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview and observation schedules. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics and presented thematically. It emerged that policy framework governing ECDE programme in Kenya was not being fully practiced in the zone. Most teachers had a certificate while a few had a diploma in ECDE. The training content was sufficient to make teachers competent. However, majority had never attended refresher courses since training. Moreover, most teachers did not enjoy harmonized terms and conditions of services, though the conditions of services were emphasized during inspection by DQASOs. The study recommended facilitation of ECDE teachers by educational officers, cooperation of parents, administration, community leaders and MOE to improve the working conditions of ECDE teachers.

Keywords: ECDE, pre-school, training, learning

1. Introduction

The Kenya vision 2030, which is the nation's new development blue print from 2008 to 2030 recognizes education and training within the social pillar alongside the economic and political pillars that are cornerstones expected to transform Kenya into a newly

industrializing middle income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). The education goals of the 2030 vision are to provide globally competitive quality education, training and research for development by increasing access to education, improving the transition rate from primary to secondary schools, raising the quality and relevance of institutions, increasing the adult literacy rate and the integration of special needs education into learning and training institutions (Namunga and Otunga, 2012). In addition to vision 2030, the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) whose main aim is to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries by 2015. The MDGs focus in three areas of human development: bolstering human capital, improving infrastructure, and increasing social, economic and political rights. Within the human capital focus, education is key.

Teachers are, thus an important component of education whose services are important in the realization of educational goals the world over (Namunga and Otunga, 2012). Due to their central role in the enterprise of education, teachers at all levels require effective and sufficient education to be able to adequately carry out their roles and responsibilities. Otiende *et al.*, (1992) acknowledge that trained teachers are vital for quality education. Teaching according to Hough and Duncan (1997) is an activity, a unique professional, rational and human activity in which one creatively and imaginatively uses himself/herself and his/her knowledge to promote the learning and welfare of others. Teacher education is an important component of education. Through it, school teachers who are considered mentors of society are prepared and produced (Lucas, 1972). Kafu (2003) says that teacher education is ostensibly designed, developed and administered to produce school teachers for the established system of education. Loughran (2006) looks at teacher education as the pre-service and in-service teacher preparation where students of teaching seek to develop knowledge and skills of teaching and to learn how to competently apply these in practice. These views summarize the importance and the role of teacher education in the life of a given society. Education in this respect is regarded as the driving force for social development. Teacher education in this study is seen as the pre-service and in-service education and training of all those involved in the dissemination of knowledge at all levels of education aimed at exposing them to new ideas and practices which continuously improve their ability to educate. The improved ability to educate is an important ingredient for sustainable development.

There are variations of teacher education programmes for the different levels of education from early childhood to tertiary education. These forms of teacher education programmes involve the study of professional disciplines, teaching subjects and general

knowledge subjects (Namunga and Otunga, 2012). There are four levels of teacher education in Kenya namely, early childhood development teacher education, primary teacher education, diploma and under graduate teacher education (Otunga *et al.*, 2011). The research will focus on the delivery of teacher training and education programme for Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE). Mpofu et al. (2007) found out that research related to quality education and care programmes for young children in Zimbabwe was scarce in Zimbabwe. The training of Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers by teachers' colleges and universities in Zimbabwe is an important aspect of how quality programmes could be improved in the country. The training of teachers for ECDE is done in different ways and by different agencies. There are national and District systems of training and development. The most common training is done at two levels: Certificate and Diploma. All are offered by District centres for early childhood education (DICECE), the kindergarten headmistress association (KHA) and the Montessori. On completion of the training, participants are awarded certificates (K.N.E.C, 2007). The curriculum of ECDE centres is developed by the Kenya institute of education's National centre for early childhood education (NACECE). At the core of the ECDE curriculum is the endeavour to address the total needs of children (NACECE, 1999). The aim of ECDE is to develop the whole personality, encompassing physical, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and mental: provides a holistic education, particularly at this formative stage of the child (K.I.E, 2006). The ECDE centres are run by parents and local communities at the district levels with the help of the central government, local and external agencies. District centres for early childhood education are the most active centres for training ECDE teachers. Intrinsic factors such as knowledge of professional area, interest in teaching and motivation are significant features in the delivery of program and can be barriers for proper curriculum implementation if there is inadequacy in any of those (Lewthwaite, 2006).

2. Statement of the problem

According to Manani (2005), the early childhood care requires quality service delivery mechanism. This can be achieved through training of the personnel to build their capacity in terms of skills and knowledge. The personnel include ECD teachers, trainers, supervisors, and education field officers who undergo through different categories of training with specific content, approaches and methodologies. In Kanyarkwat Zone, for the past ten years, the learning of young learners has been affected significantly. However, it is not yet known whether qualifications and training

capability of pre – school teachers is as a result of this thereby necessitating this research.

2.1 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study were to;

1. To find out the teachers adequacy in knowledge and training in teaching ECDE centres in Kanyarkwat Zone;
2. To analyse the effect of training on learning process in ECDE centres in Kanyarkwat Zone;
3. To find out challenges facing teachers in acquiring training on ECDE learning in Kanyarkwat Zone.

3. Theoretical framework

The study will be guided by situated learning theory. Situated learning theory posits that learning activity takes place in specific circumstances (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to situated learning, the important aspect of peoples' engagement in activity acting in context is the focus on the unfolding of real activity in a real setting (Nardi, 1992). These authors therefore imply that meaningful learning can be made specific to the situation at hand. Thus, learning occurs in the lives of persons who are embedded in the culture that enables learning to occur. Situated learning theory presents learning as a meaning making practice that is not separate from the context in which it is situated (Barab & Duffy, 2012). In this understanding, experiencing learning embedded within the work context enables the people learning to participate in authentic practice (Land, Hannafin and Oliver, 2012). According to Land, et al. (2012) learning within practices, situations and processes of a community frame how knowledge is meaningfully used. In other words, the best way to acquire and utilize new learning is to locate the learning experience within a community of actors and in the context where the knowledge and skills are required. Situated learning, according to Barab and Duffy (2012), guides peoples' interactions, the practices they engage in, the reasons for their engagement in particular practices, the resources they use, and the constraints of the particular task at hand. These are important factors in determining the activities people engage in when learning and the contextual realities that influence their actions. For example, contextual analysis is critical in determining the contextual realities before implementing a learning program. Contextual analysis would among other factors contribute towards understanding and determining the participants' needs, their capabilities and inadequacies, contextual constraints, potential activities and learning approaches.

Situated learning theory guided the development of content and implementation of training on professional development of teachers in this study, particularly in terms of embedding the learning experiences within the work context in school and classrooms. Situated learning theory is particularly important for adult learners who have specific and immediate needs for their daily engagements. Adult learners also have unique characteristics including busy lives and may require personalized attention in their learning, including appreciation of their previous experiences as reviewed in the following section on adult learning.

4. Literature review

4.1 Early childhood education

The definition of the term, early childhood education, depends on where it is looked at the issue from. In terms of child's life, it is the period from birth to eight years of age (Miles and Browne, 2004). Grotewell and Burton (2008) also shared this definition, elaborated it accordingly as the time between the zero and eight years of age. However, by school terms, early childhood education incorporates the group settings for infants through elementary school grade three (Miles and Browne, 2004). In other words, early childhood education is a special branch of education serving with children from infancy to elementary grade level of three (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008). As definitions imply, early childhood education brings the children (birth to eight) into the arena. Significance of the early childhood education increased tremendously all over the world within the last twenty years. This situation is complementary with research results based on long term effects of early education to later life (Groark, et al., 2007).

4.2 Preschool teacher training

Teacher's and caregiver's training is another key dimension for quality ECCE, and implies that better quality services can be obtained through upgrading professionals (ARNEC, 2011a). For some countries, it seems urgent to increase and improve the pre-service and in-service training opportunities, and to address the disparities in the coverage of qualified teachers at sub-national level, especially between urban and rural areas (UNESCO et al., 2012). Others sustain that this dimension should be a core part of ECD programme evaluation (Yousafzai, 2010). There is a need to identify standards in a region where duration of teacher training and the teachers'/caregivers' educational level required may vary significantly (UNESCO et al., 2012, SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2011, Rao and Sun, 2010a), and data on teacher qualifications are not always available, especially in remote areas (UNESCO et al., 2012). Most countries have a general teaching licence

or certificate and some require a specific ECCE license too. However the educational requirements differ by country, and some indicate the period of specific trainings whereas others require diplomas or college degrees (Udommana, 2012).

In addition, principals' and administrators' qualification are important in assuring quality (ARNEC, 2011b). To this end, the report on the South Asia region shows minimum requirements for childcare personnel, teachers and supervisors alike. Moreover, the report does not limit the standards pertinent to this dimension in the training, but it also includes the working conditions (i.e. working hours; salary; rewards and incentives), the professional development programme and performance assessment (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2011). Hence the teacher's status is also an element of quality ECCE, and can be translated into an appropriate wage, regular schedule, and gender parity (in some places teachers and caregivers are female only). Furthermore, some parents claimed the (lack of) regular presence of the teachers in the classroom as an important issue affecting quality (Young Lives, 2010, SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), 2010).

And UNESCO et al. (2012) highlight the importance of skill training to improve child-teacher interaction. Within the Global Campaign for Education, a case of best practice from Pakistan (Muñoz, 2012), shows these elements of training for teachers: holistic development, importance of play, commitment to parents, evaluation of learning and creating an appropriate learning environment. Moreover, some trained teachers are supposed to replicate the training in the districts (the so-called cascade model). Another example of good practice from Indonesia (ARNEC and SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2012) is the Capability Building programme for Early Childhood Educators, which was organised because many educators in Indonesia do not meet the qualifications required. The same training approaches are also used after the training as teaching methods (e.g. Montessori, High Scope, and Reggio Emilia).

Singapore emphasises well-qualified and trained principals and teachers behind high quality preschool education (Ting, 2007), sets minimum qualifications for teachers (raised in the recent years), and offers incentives (grants and scholarships) for teachers and caregivers (MCYS and CDN, n.a.). Moreover, it has developed a framework for teacher-training and accreditation, and it is formulating the Continuous Professional Development Framework for teachers and supervisors (MCYS and CDN, n.a., MCYS, n.a.). In Korea, educators and teachers have a minimum educational level higher than many other OECD countries (Taguma et al., 2012), and in Taiwan, all teachers receive specialised training coherent with the Development Appropriate Practice (DAP) (McMullen et al., 2005). A different picture is in China where teachers rarely have qualifications to teach children under 6 years and irregular attendance in the rural area

are seen. Moreover, some staff characteristics are considered important for quality ECCE, such as age, commitment, and engagement with children (Rao, 2010). However in recent years, teacher training has become more formalised and specialised, and a teaching certificate is considered an indicator of quality (Zhai and Gao, 2008).

In Bangladesh, the pre-primary framework mentions training of trainers (ToT) for pre-primary teacher/facilitator, and capacity building for the organisation and personnel (MoPME Bangladesh, 2008). Here it is worth to mention the activity of mentoring provided by networks of teachers (e.g. in Bangladesh the platform CAMPE3), which can play a significant role to train teachers and therefore should be considered too. In India, complementarity between pre-in-service and on-site training is foreseen (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012a, Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012b). To conclude, this fundamental dimension of quality may include several variables (regarding the training and status of both teacher/caregiver and other ECCE service's personnel), and it shows a multifaceted scenario, with different levels of qualifications required and types of training. Therefore, whilst there is scope for standards to be set by selecting some of the elements/indicators considered in the regional literature (e.g. minimum educational level; type of teaching licence/certificate; duration of training flexibility seems of utmost importance in order to fit the different contexts of the region and avoid fixing standards which are hardly achievable in some deprived circumstances).

4.4 Levels of teacher education in Kenya

There are four levels of teacher education in Kenya namely, early childhood development teacher education, primary teacher education, diploma and under graduate teacher education (Otunga et al, 2011).

A. Early Childhood Development Teacher Education (ECDE)

The training of teachers for ECDE is done in different ways and by different agencies. There are national and District systems of training and development. The most common training is done at two levels: Certificate and Diploma. All are offered by District centres for early childhood education (DICECE), the kindergarten headmistress association (KHA) and the Montessori. On completion of the training, participants are awarded certificates (K.N.E.C, 2007). The curriculum of ECDE centres is developed by the Kenya institute of education's National centre for early childhood education (NACECE). At the core of the ECDE curriculum is the endeavour to address the total needs of children (NACECE, 1999). The aim of ECDE is to develop the whole personality, encompassing physical, intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and mental: provides a holistic education, particularly at this formative stage of the child (K.I.E,

2006). The ECDE centres are run by parents and local communities at the district levels with the help of the central government, local and external agencies. District centres for early childhood education are the most active centres for training ECDE teachers

B. Teacher certificate in ECDE

The certificate in ECDE is offered through pre-service and in-service, each having 810 contact hours. Pre-service programme is covered in one year and in three residential school terms and with one term (or 300 hours) of teaching practice in ECDE institutions. The in-service programme takes two years in residential sessions during school holidays (Otunga et al, 2011). To be admitted in this programme, one needs a D+(Plus) in KCSE or a pass in KCPE and must have taught in ECDE for a minimum of three years and passed a proficiency test offered by Kenya National Examination Council (K.N.E.C., 2007). The curriculum at this level covers institutional methods of assessing, types of assessment at the early childhood level and institutional materials for teaching at this level. The teacher trainee should be able to analyze measurement and geographical concepts, apply practical instructional methods in teaching, develop instructional materials, and design assessment tools to evaluate children's progress in learning (K.I.E., 2002).

C. Diploma in ECDE

The ECDE diploma programme was launched in 1985 and it is intended to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes desired and stimulate children in preparation for primary education. The course is also meant to fill the gap between the certificate and degree course to provide an opportunity for professional upward mobility in the ECDE programme (KIE, 2006, P. 22; Mbaabu, 1996). Diploma in ECDE is a two-year programme through pre-service and in-service of 780 contact hours. Pre-service is a three residential academic school terms, with one term (or 300hrs) for teaching practice in an ECDE institution. In-service alternative involves six residential sessions during school vacation. Admission in this programme according to Otunga et al (2011) requires DICECE, Kindergarten headmistress association or Montessori certificate, PI certificate, C (Plain) in KCSE or its equivalent. Teaching practice is mandatory and must be passed before qualifying for award of a certificate. A trainee is attached to an ECDE centre for at least three months to interact with children, teachers, parents and community. The student teacher is assessed on the preparation of schemes of work, classroom management and control and record keeping. Trainees also undertake a course in research, monitoring and evaluation. They are to design and research on a relevant topic (K.I.E., 2006).

D. Training ECDE teachers at University level

From 1990s, universities embarked on the programme of training teachers for this level of education. This programme is offered at Kenyatta University, Moi University and University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (Otunga et al, 2011).

E. Primary teacher education

There are currently 19 public primary teacher training colleges and 68 private ones. In July 2010, a total of 7827 candidates were admitted to the 19 public primary colleges for the PI training. Of these females were 3932, an indication that gender parity had been achieved in the admissions (Internet, 21 July, 2010). The teacher trainees in primary teacher colleges undergo a two-year pre-service course, which leads to the award of primary teacher education certificate (PTEC). The entry requirement for PTEC Course is a minimum C (Plain) in KCSE or its equivalent and must have attained D (Plain) in mathematics and C- in English. The PTE curriculum currently used was revised in 2004. The improvement was necessitated by the need to make curriculum reflect and respond to the changes in the society, as emphasized in various education forums such as the conference of college principals association held in 2004. It was an attempt to harmonize the PTE syllabus with the revised primary and secondary curriculum. The curriculum is broad-based with ten subjects in the first year of study. In the second year, the students study nine subjects, five (5) core subjects and four (4) elective subjects from either the humanities or science categories to allow for specialization. The five core subjects are English, Kiswahili, Education, Physical education, and information communication technology (ICT) and each student is then required to choose four subjects from either option A or B. Option A subjects include Science, Home Science, Agriculture and Mathematics while option B subjects include Music, Art and Craft, Social studies and religious studies (MOEST, PTE Syllabus, Vol. 2, 2001). Teaching practice is mandatory and is conducted in three sessions, one in the first year and two in the second year.

F. Diploma teacher education

Diploma Teacher education programme is a three –year programme. Trainees are admitted with a minimum mean grade of C+ (Plus) and a C+ in the subjects of specialization and C (Plain) in Mathematics for those taking sciences, D+ (plus) in Mathematics for those taking humanities and C (Plain) in English for all applicants. Trainees are offered a broad-based curriculum which comprises two teaching subjects and professional and support subjects. Professional and support studies are education, environmental education, physical education (PE), communication skills, entrepreneurship, ICT, General workshops practices, library and information studies, and guidance and counselling (Otunga et al, 2011). Currently we have two diploma teachers college namely, Kibabii DTTC for humanities and Kagumo DTTC for Science.

We have also Kenya Technical Teachers' College (KTTC) offering technical education and Kenya institute of special education (KISE) offering special education which have their own admission requirements. The Kenya government recognized the importance of technical education in moving the country to an industrialized state by the year 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). It is for this reason that the country plans to spend at least 25 million dollars with the assistance of the Netherlands Government to buy modern equipment and train teachers in 13 new polytechnics where each province is expected to have at least one polytechnic (Nganga, 2010).

G. Bachelor of education programme

The bachelor of education course has various strands which include B. Ed. (Arts) B. Ed. (sc.), B.Ed. (Technology), B.Ed. (Guidance and Counselling), and B. Ed. (Early Childhood and Primary Education). The teacher is equipped with skills for teaching in ECDE, primary, secondary, teacher training colleges, Institutes and polytechnics. The course content at this level has two major components: teaching subject content and professional areas. In addition, teaching practice is mandatory and must be passed in order to qualify for the award of the certificate (Otunga et al, 2011).

5. Methodology

A descriptive research design technique was used. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) indicate that a descriptive research design determines and reports the way things are. This type of research attempts to describe such things as possible behaviour, attitudes, values and characteristics. The target population for the study comprise of pre-school teachers in all ECD centres within Kanyarkwat Zone, West Pokot County. According to the Kanyarkwat AEO, there are 14 ECDE within the Zone with an average number of 3 teachers per school. This translates to 42 teachers in the whole Zone. The study used simple random sampling technique in selecting respondents. This method of sampling involved giving a number to every subject or member of the accessible population, placing the numbers in a container and then picking any number at a random. The study used questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was prepared for pre-school teachers. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics; frequencies and percentages. The analysed data was presented using tables, pie charts and graphs. All ethical procedures pertaining research was observed.

6. Results and Discussions

6.1 Training of Early Childhood Development Education Teachers

Training has been looked at in two broad areas: pre-service and in-service training. Under pre-service, the following areas were examined: nature of training, duration of training, mode of training, and adequacy of content taught during the training programmes. The study was interested in finding out the level at which

Table 1: Teacher qualifications in ECDE Training

Level of training	Freq	Percent
Secondary	24	57.1
Certificate	13	31.0
Diploma	4	9.5
Higher Diploma	1	2.4
Total	42	100.0

The results of the study show that most 24 (57.1%) had secondary level of education, 13 (31%) of pre – school teachers had certificate level of education, 4 (9.5%) said that they had diploma level of training and only 1 (2.4%) said that they had post graduate diploma in ECD. The results implies that teacher qualification and training level in ECDE in Kanyarkwat Zone is still low and this could have adverse effect on teaching and learning in ECDE centres. The results are inconsistent with Wangila, Kafu and Nyandusi (2012) research findings in Bungoma South District which established that all teachers in Bungoma South District, Early Child Development Centres were professionally qualified. Majority of the teachers had certificate in ECDE. An equally high proportion, 13(34.2%), had Diploma and above qualification in teaching ECDE. This caliber of teachers of ECDE in Bungoma South District was competent and well qualified in teaching ECDE.

6.2 Duration of training

Another aspect of teacher training that the study investigated concerned the duration at which teachers had undergone training course in early childhood development. The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 1.

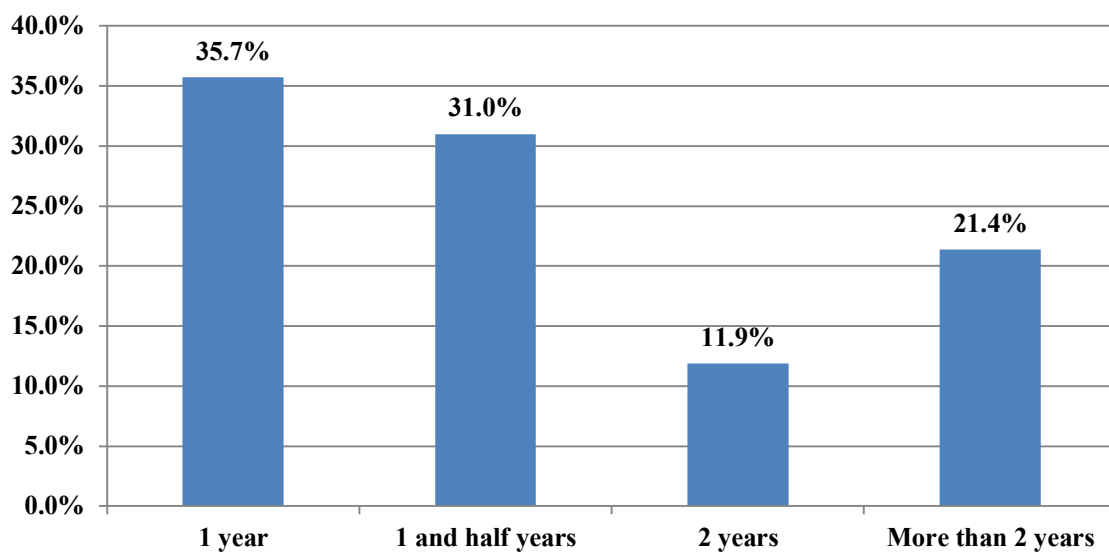


Figure 1: Duration of teacher training

The results of the study shows that 35.7% of teachers had undergone training on ECDE for one year, 31% said that they undertook the ECDE course for one and a half year, 16.7% said that their training took two years, 11.9% said that it took three months while 4.8% said that it two three years. The results indicates that only 21.4% of teachers had undergone full training in ECDE and this could be the result for poor teaching and learning process in ECD centres in Kanyarkwat Division. The results concur with Wangila *et al.*, (2012) result from Bungoma County who established that majority, 35 (92.1%), of the teacher respondents had trained for 1-2 years. This duration is not enough to adequately prepare a teacher to handle ECDE children. According to the reviewed literature, in Ghana, the basic level teacher training course lasts three years after which a certificate is awarded.

6.3 Mode of training

NACECE the body regulation ECDE has recommended various and best methods of ECDE teacher training. The pre – school teachers were asked to indicate the mode at which they undertook their studies in ECD as reflected in Figure 2.

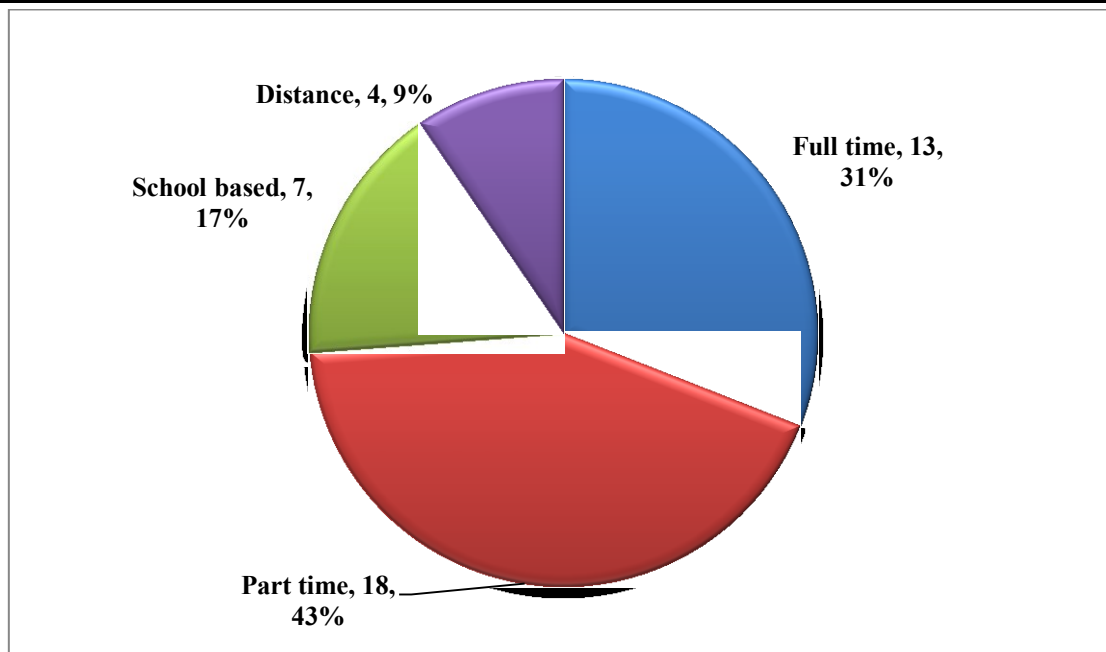


Figure 2: Mode of training

The result shows that 18 (43%) of pre – school teachers had attended their training on part time basis, 13 (31%) said that they attended their training on full time mode, 7 (17%) attended during school holidays while 4(9%) said they undertook their course on distance. The results coincides with Wangila *et al.*, (2012) found out that 27(71.1%) teachers had gone for part time training while 11(28.9%) had opted for full time training. It is obvious that part time is not as efficient as full time training. This was in collaboration with the information that majority of the teachers, 35(92%), had undergone their training for 1-2 years.

6.4 Adequacy of content taught during training programme

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the content training in their schools were content with. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Adequacy of Content Taught during Training Programme

Content	Freq	Percent
Sufficient	17	40.5
Insufficient	25	59.5
Total	42	100.0

The result show 25 (59.5%) of pre – school teachers are insufficient with content taught during training programme while only 17 (40.5%) said that the content of ECDE course was sufficient with them. This shows that majority of pre – school teachers are not happy with training content received in colleges. This is in contrast with Wangila *et al.*,

(2012) findings that showed that majority of pre – school teachers in Bungoma County were content with teaching methods used at ECDE training. The finding contradicts with what Gross *et al.*, (1971) have advanced, that for any implementation to take place, the implementers need to have knowledge about an innovation.

6.5 Effect of training on teaching and learning process in ECD classrooms

As second objective of the study, the respondents were asked to state the effect of pre – school teacher training on teaching and learning process in classrooms in Kanyarkwat Zone. Through a scale of three, the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they applied various techniques of teaching in learning in classrooms. The results of the analysis are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Effect of training on teaching and learning process in ECD classrooms

Effect	Always		Occasionally		Rarely		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I do cooperate with children most of the time	13	31.7	26	63.4	2	4.9	41	100.0
Practicing child-centred approach in teaching rather than teacher-centred	16	38.1	16	38.1	10	23.8	42	100.0
I do practice friendly behaviour with children	23	54.8	14	33.3	5	11.9	42	100.0
I do interact with children based on their needs	12	28.6	17	40.5	13	31.0	42	100.0
I do create appropriate environment for children participation in class	19	45.2	21	50	2	4.8	42	100.0
Running question-answer method in class	9	21.4	23	54.8	10	23.8	42	100.0

The result of the study shows that 26 (63.4%) of teachers occasionally cooperated with children most of the time in schools, 13 (31.7%) always practiced it while 2 (4.9%) rarely practiced it. This shows that teachers inadequate training influence their cooperation with children in classrooms. Moreover, on the extent to which teachers practiced child – centred approaches in teaching in classrooms, 16 (38.1%) practiced it on both occasional and regular basis with only 10 (23.8%) practicing it on rare occasions. Furthermore, the results of the study showed that as a consequence of low teacher training levels in ECDE, the children learning process is compromised on most ECD centres in Kanyarkwat Zone.

Teachers’ opinion on Training Needs towards Improving Teaching and Learning Process in ECD Classrooms

This is the third objective of the research which sought teachers’ views on challenges influencing training needs of ECDE teachers in the study area. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Teachers' opinion on training needs towards improving teaching and learning process in classrooms

Content	Freq	Percent
Poverty	17	40.5
Lack support	7	16.7
No ECDE colleges around	9	21.4
Lack of instructional materials	7	16.7
Shortage of qualified teachers	2	4.8
Total	42	100.0

The results of the study shows that 17 (40.5%) of preschool teachers cited that high poverty level was a major hindrance towards attendance of training on ECDE. The teachers lamented that most of them are paid little amounts of money by parents and their institutions and therefore cannot afford to go for in – service or further training in the field. Teachers' salary was a useful indicator of centre quality (Anning 2004). Poor remuneration of teachers could therefore be linked to poor programme quality. Findings also reveal that 9 (21.4%) of teachers cited that there are no colleges around for ECDE and the nearer one is in Kabarnet town which makes it difficult for majority of preschool teachers to attend, 7 (16.7%) said that there is inadequate support from ECD administrators for further teacher training while 7 (16.7%) also cited that lack of instructional materials in most centres affected teaching and learning process. Lastly, 2 (4.8%) observed that most centres have shortage of staff therefore making it impossible for them to go for part-time training.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Teachers of ECDE in Kanyarkwat Zone are not well professionally qualified and experienced enough to teach in ECDCs. It was found out that large proportions of teachers have not undergone in-service training. Most of the teachers went in for part-time courses with the majority stating that the content taught during the training was not sufficient to make them competent ECDE teachers. It can be concluded that majority of ECDE teachers had never attended some refresher courses since their initial training. Moreover, the inadequate training opportunities available to preschool teachers in Kanyarkwat Zone influenced teaching and learning process in classrooms as teachers were found to use teacher – centred teaching approaches rather than child – centred ones. In recommendations, ECDE teachers should be facilitated and supported by educational officers, headteachers and parents to undergo training and also attend refresher courses in order to be conversant with emerging issues in the ECDE

curriculum. There should be sensitization of the ECDE policy framework to all stakeholders by the Ministry of Education and County Governments, through induction or refresher courses for clarity and smooth implementation.

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